



# ACCREDITATION POLICY: A GUIDE FOR CONTINUING COMPETENCY PROVIDERS

## Overview

The purpose of the *Accreditation Policy* is to outline the principles, policy, and processes that the College of Opticians of British Columbia (College), or its designate, the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), shall use in evaluating submissions for accreditation from continuing competency providers.

## Continuing Competency Program

The *Health Professions Act*, the governing legislation for the College, requires each health regulatory organization to develop and administer a Continuing Competency program to promote high practice standards and maintain continuing competence among its registrants.

The purpose of the College's Continuing Competency program is to ensure that practicing opticians have maintained the required knowledge, skill, and judgement to practice competently, safely and ethically, in the interest of the public. The College's program is geared towards directed learning, which means that registrants will focus on continuing competencies that they need working on.

## Continuing Competency Providers

In order to ensure availability and diversity of activities offered the College encourages all eligible providers to submit applications for accreditation. All applications will be evaluated using the same accreditation principles.

Providers include but are not limited to:

- Regulatory bodies, including the College of Opticians of BC
- Registrants
- Professional associations within the eye care industry
- Industry stakeholders
- Teaching/training institutions
- Eye-health related organizations



## Principles of Accreditation

The following four principles will be considered in approving Continuing Competency (CC) activities for accreditation. These principles will be applied fairly and consistently in reviewing all applications for accreditation.

### Principle 1 – Learning Outcomes Consistent with Continuing Competency

The learning objectives shall be directly aligned with meeting the continuing competencies based on the *National Competencies for Canadian Opticians* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

**Continuing competencies** are the ongoing skills, knowledge, and judgement necessary for competent practice of opticianry. The Continuing Competency program is a formal system mandated by the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) of assessing, monitoring, and reporting on the continuing competency of opticians.

The breakdown of each continuing competency and its performance indicators can be found in the continuing competency blueprint on the **NACOR website**, by clicking [here](#).

Using NACOR's application [form](#), providers will identify the continuing competencies that correspond with the activities they are submitting. NACOR will review and approve whether the identified competencies are appropriate.

Guideline 1: Activities submitted can cover multiple competencies.

For example, a seminar on a broad topic like the standards of practice may cover the following two competencies:

Competencies	Performance Indicators, for reference
<b>Unit 1: Assumes Professional Responsibilities</b>  <b>1.1 Demonstrate a commitment to patient/client, the public and the profession.</b>	1.1.1 Adhere to privacy and confidentiality legislation, regulatory requirements and employer policies.
	1.1.3 Communicate title and credentials accurately.
	1.1.5 Refer any incompetent, illegal or unethical conduct by colleagues (regulated and non-regulated) or other health personnel to the appropriate authority.
<b>Unit 6: Demonstrates Clinical Knowledge</b>  <b>6.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the functionality of the instruments used in the examination of the eye and the implications of the results.</b>	6.1.4 Interpret the readings and apply your knowledge to inform decisions and actions.

Guideline 2: While the College encourages submission of activities that teach multiple competencies, a CC activity that teaches at least one competency will be accepted for review. It is not required to cover all the performance indicators under each competency.



Guideline 3: Continuing competency activities will deliver on the stated learning objectives.

## **Principle 2– Accessible and Interactive Learning**

There shall be diverse activities considered for accreditation to provide various options for registrants in terms of costs, formats, and delivery method (in-person and online). Whenever possible, in-person activities shall be available in an online format after the presentation.

Activities shall provide opportunities for registrants to interact.

Guideline 1: Providers will ensure that the level of information presented is relevant to the target audience. Providers shall identify any pre-requisites for participants to access and participate in the CC activity offered, if applicable.

## **Principle 3 – Relevant to Practice and Continuing Competency**

The learning outcomes, content, and course design will be relevant to the targeted competency. If scenarios and case studies are presented, these shall be related to the practice of opticianry.

The *Opticians Regulation* defines opticianry as, “the health profession in which a person provides the services of:

- (a) dispensing vision appliances by
  - (i) using information contained in prescriptions, contact lens records and assessment records, and
  - (ii) duplicating corrective eyeglass lenses, with no change in refractive value, using a lensometer or similar device,
- (b) conducting automated refractions on the request of prescribers,
- (c) conducting independent automated refractions, and
- (d) promoting eye health and proper use of vision appliances...”

Content for continuing competency activities shall be developed with the purpose of educating registrants in the knowledge, skills, and judgement ([found in the continuing competency blueprint](#)) necessary for the ongoing practice of opticianry.

In addition, providers shall seek feedback from instructors, presenters, and co-learners for each CC activity offered.

Guideline 1: In addition to meeting continuing competencies, the accredited activities shall feature topics that address emerging and current vision care needs of the public of British Columbia. Examples of these topics include: patient-centered care practices, inter-professional collaboration among eye-care professionals, and vision services for the aging demographic.

The College will periodically publish these priority areas on its website.



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a B.C. Health Regulator

Guideline 2: Registrants will have an opportunity to assess the CC activity they have participated in for the purpose of improving the content, design, and presentation. As far as practicable, feedback shall be collected immediately following the CC activity. Registrants will have the option to submit their comments anonymously.

Registrants' feedback will be reviewed to maintain accreditation of the activities. Continuing competency providers shall consider and act on registrants' feedback to improve the content and delivery of their activities.

### **Principle 4 – Quality Information (evidence-based, objective, current, and relevant)**

CC activities shall be evidence-based, objective, current, and relevant.

Guideline 1: Evidence-based – Information used is based on credible research. Sources of information shall be clearly cited by the provider. These references will be easily accessible if registrants wish to find more information directly from the source.

Guideline 2: Objective – The information presented shall not focus on personal opinions or direct advertising of particular brands.

The focus of the CC activity will be information about the benefits of the product or technology rather than endorsement of company products or services. Such benefits would have been confirmed by research and not just based on personal endorsement of the presenter.

A provider may mention its product or technology as long as there is also mention of similar technology and products from other companies. Derogatory or discriminatory statements made against any organization, its products, and technology will not be allowed. However, comparison of technology and products may be warranted if information is based on research conducted by a neutral party.

Guideline 3: Current – Information presented shall not be outdated. Currency of information means there is no updated version of the information that contradicts the evidence presented.

Guideline 4: Relevant – The content shall be directly linked to continuing competencies for Canadian Opticians.

## **Pre-requisites for Activities**

Providers may include pre-requisites for certain CC activities. For example, a provider may offer a course with graduated levels of information: basic, intermediate, and advanced.

Providers may restrict registration in the advanced course to those who have successfully completed the basic level.

Industry providers may specify whether the CC activities they are offering are open to all registrants or are limited to their optician employees. The College recognizes that employers



may develop professional development activities for their employees and may not be able to offer the same activities to all opticians due to intellectual property rights.

## Types of Continuing Competency Activities for Accreditation

CC activities include:

- Live presentations (seminar, lecture, or workshop)
- Webinars
- Self-directed online learning
- Study groups
- Mentorship or opticianry-related work training
- Research projects (either conducted or participated in by registrants)
- Volunteer optical work
- Practicum
- Academic courses
- Tours (laboratory, manufacturing)
- Other activities

## Submission Requirements

A) Pre-CC activity - The application form and the accompanying materials below are required.

- Application form
- Detailed Outline of topics to be covered
- Copies of actual materials (e.g. course materials)
- Contact information of teachers, presenters, or facilitators
- Sources of information with complete citations
- Presentation slides (*if applicable*)
- Handouts to be used during presentation (*if applicable*)

The College may send a representative to attend any accredited CC activity for the purpose of reviewing whether the actual presentation is consistent with what has been submitted by the provider.

B) Submission schedule and fees – NACOR’s guide for submission can be viewed [here](#).

C) Post-CC activity

- 1) Materials - After the CC activity is completed, the provider must submit any material used or covered that has not been previously submitted to NACOR. For example, the provider must re-submit presentation slides if those were updated.

CC activity materials may be made available by NACOR to participants upon request (except the application form). The provider may indicate if any of the material is not available for distribution to the registrants due to intellectual property rights.



Providers are primarily responsible for making available the CC activity materials, free of charge, to participants for a minimum of **90 days** after completing the activity.

- 2) Proof of completion - Providers must issue a proof of completion to each participant, which shall include these details:
  - Participant's full name and license number
  - CC activity title and code
  - Date of completion
- 3) List of participants (*optional*) – If available, the provider may provide to the College an electronic list of participants who completed each CC activity.

## Suspension of Accreditation

Accreditation of a CC activity may be suspended for the following reasons:

- A) Significant inconsistencies between the materials presented during the actual course or presentation compared to what was submitted to NACOR. Significant inconsistencies mean that the content has been changed. Minor inconsistencies such as change in the order of how information is presented, will not result in suspension.
- B) If the CC activity received unsatisfactory feedback from participants.
  - For example, majority of participants provided feedback that the CC activity failed to meet the stated learning objectives. Or the presenter was not able to effectively communicate the information to the participants.
- C) If the CC activity no longer meets the accreditation principles.
  - For example, new research information coming out making the materials contained in a lecture or a course outdated.

NACOR will advise the provider in writing if the accreditation of a CC activity is suspended. Reasons for suspension and steps for re-submitting an application will be included in the letter.

If an accreditation is suspended for reasons under A and C, the Applicant will have to submit a new application.

## Accreditation Details

Accreditation will be effective for three years from the date of approval.

### Appendices

- Application form
- National Competencies for Canadian Opticians, 3rd Edition